



# NEWS RELEASE

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900 N. Stiles Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73104-3234, USA • Tel: 405-815-6552 • [OKcommerce.gov](http://OKcommerce.gov)

**Media Contacts:**

Oklahoma Department of Commerce  
Becky Samples  
405-967-1730  
[becky.samples@okcommerce.gov](mailto:becky.samples@okcommerce.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Oklahoma Department of Commerce Celebrates Fifth Anniversary of Aerospace Commerce Economic Services (ACES) Program**

**Oklahoma City** – The Oklahoma Department of Commerce is celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Aerospace Commerce Economic Services (ACES) program, a groundbreaking initiative that has redefined efforts to strengthen the state’s aerospace and defense sector. Established in 2018 under House Bill 2578, ACES has been a catalyst for significant economic growth, business development, workforce development, and industry expansion across Oklahoma.

“As Oklahoma’s second largest and fastest growing sector, aerospace is critical to Oklahoma’s economy,” said Lt. Governor Matt Pinnell, Secretary of Workforce and Economic Development. “The ACES program has been incredibly successful in increasing collaboration among our state’s aerospace leaders, diversifying the economy, and fostering growth in the aerospace sector. I look forward to what the next five years will bring.”

“I am proud of the success of the ACES program and the progress that’s been made to strengthen our state’s aerospace and defense sector while also supporting economic diversification,” said Sen. Paul Rosino. “I look forward to the opportunity to continue to work alongside the ACES team and other stakeholders in this vital sector to bring increased investment in this arena and more job opportunities for Oklahomans.”

With a focus on promoting economic development, ACES has had a remarkable impact, contributing significantly to the state’s economy. Since the program’s inception, the ACES team at Commerce has assisted in securing more than \$1.6 billion in new capital investment through 52 project wins, resulting in more than 10,000 new jobs with half of those project wins representing expansions of existing Oklahoma companies.

The ACES program is a conduit for creating growth opportunities for existing Oklahoma companies. During 2023, 28 Oklahoma businesses partnered with ACES to exhibit at industry tradeshows, leading to new sales and trade opportunities. The program is also focused on increasing contracts between Oklahoma aerospace and defense companies and the Department of Defense and its prime contractors. To support this effort, ACES has hosted the Oklahoma Aerospace & Defense Industry Day (2022, 2023) alongside the Strategic Alternate Sourcing Program Office (SASPO) at Tinker Air Force Base and

partnered with Boeing to host the Boeing Oklahoma Industry Day specifically for Oklahoma companies looking to do business with Boeing.

Beyond its economic impact, ACES has been a champion of workforce development. The program has actively collaborated with educational institutions, aviation academies, and training centers to better prepare a skilled and capable workforce for the aviation industry. The program has also hosted multiple successful aerospace-specific career fairs, highlighting the vast job opportunities available in the sector.

Furthermore, ACES has been instrumental in driving industry growth. The program has supported research and development efforts, innovation in aviation technology, and has actively engaged with industry stakeholders to create an environment that fosters innovation and collaboration. This has led to the growth of existing businesses and the emergence of new enterprises within the aviation sector.

“The fifth anniversary of the ACES program marks a significant milestone for Oklahoma, demonstrating the state’s dedication to aerospace and economic prosperity,” said Hopper Smith, Brigadier General, ARNG (ret.), State Director of Aerospace and Defense, Commerce. “We know this is just the beginning of a bright future for the ACES program and look forward to continuing our efforts to further grow this exciting and transformational sector.”

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